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All, in all, the *Beatrice* volume seems to me an enormous success (certainly three cheers!), on a level with the best of the earlier volumes of the NBE. The entire series, in fact, should be acquired by every music library of moderate size or larger. Smaller libraries and private individuals may of course prefer to pick up the study-sized offprint editions of certain volumes (e.g., *The Trojans*) that Eulenburg has been marketing, but should be warned that these lack the critical reports that make study of the NBE volumes so rewarding.

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Suzanne Haïk Vantoura. La musique de la Bible révélée; une notation millénaire décryptée, premier recueil: 14 mélodies essentielles, accompagnement pour cordes pincées. Paris: Editions Choudens (Presser), 1978. [Notes in Fr., Eng., 9 p., score, 38 p., $15.00]

If one takes in his hand *The Music of the Bible Revealed* by Vantoura, one must be prepared for a most unpleasant surprise. For according to the author's conception (and it is sensational), *all* studies on the traditional cantillation of the Hebrew Bible, a field of musical and philological endeavours for about a thousand years, were senseless, false, and altogether futile. It does not bother Vantoura that among the scholars who had (according to her) produced nothing but irrelevant nonsense are names such as Juda ha-Levi, Johannes Reuchlin, Elia Levita, Franz Delitzsch, W. Wickes, Paul Kahle, O. Fleischer, A. Z. Idelsohn, Curt Sachs, not to mention the entire talmudic and rabbinic literature on the subject. Indeed, the oldest and most important source, the *Diqduqe ha-te'amim* of the tenth century, which establishes the grammatical basis of the biblical accents, is not even mentioned. Instead, Vantoura has the temerity to write: "Mysterious cantillation signs have appeared in the Hebrew Bible since the year 895." In this sentence every word is either incorrect or simply not true. Signs "have appeared" in the Hebrew Bible ever since the sixth century, and in three different versions: the Proto-Palestinian, the Babylonian, and the Tiberian, which has generally been accepted by Jewry. It is also by no means certain that these signs or accents originally served as a kind of neumes to indicate the cantillation at all! The link between these so-called "masoretic" signs and the much older, but totally unsystematic practice of chanting the text was established—in a rather loose way—by Rabbi Natronai Gaon during the ninth century.

Vantoura, however, knows better: "Only for the past few centuries has the Synagogue given a melodic meaning to the signs, but it is neither precise nor musical." Perhaps the twelfth century might be considered one of the "past few centuries," for from that century originated the oldest extant manuscript of biblical cantillation, notated by the convert Jew Obadya *ha-ger* (Abidas the proselyte), a Norman nobleman from Sicily who had to leave Europe and spent his life in the near East. He expressed the masoretic signs in the notation of his time, that is, in Beneventan neumes.

The following sentences are found in a leaf inserted in the review copy. Apparently, Vantoura wants the reader to believe that: (1) Each accent stands for just one tone of a scale (no reason given); (2) The scale happens to be the ecclesiastical Phrygian tone E-e (no reason given); and (3) The names of the accents reveal their meaning and function. (The author is obviously unaware of the fact that some of the names were changed in the course of centuries, some of them more than once!) The author is also ignorant of the fact that the primary function of these "mysterious signs" was not musical, but punctuating and rhetorical. She does not know that the shape of the accents underwent considerable changes during the centuries. Modern scholarship, since about 1890—largely ignored by Vantoura—considers the accents of the Hebrew Bible a special case of the general practice of the Near East that provided sacred or poetic texts, especially when they are to be read publicly, with "ecphonetic" accents. The Bible, the Syriac and Byzantine lectionaries, ancient missals, and certain ancient Sanscrit texts contain such signs, which vary from language to lan-

guage and from region to region. As every scholar knows, the Hebrew signs are closest to the Syriac and Byzantine ecphonetic accents. Their function in the Hebrew Bible is threefold: (1) to ensure the proper division of each sentence (punctuation); (2) to indicate the rhetorical inflection of the reader's voice; and (3) to designate the syllable that is to be stressed.

The oldest *musical* interpretation of the accents understands them as motives of two or more intervals, never as single tones. Nor is the finalis always considered as the tonic of the scale of the cantillation. All such theses are free inventions of the imaginative Vantoura. Yet the worst blunders occur always when she deals with what she considers history. Her combination of temerity, self-confidence, and ignorance causes statements such as the following: "Latterdays commentators date [the signs] as early as the time of Ezra." (Which commentators?) "This is also the opinion of modern specialists." (Who are the modern specialists?) "The Bible lacks punctuating marks—they were not envisaged until the 3rd century *before* our era." In fact, they were not envisaged until the earliest Masoretes—or if one may speak of oral punctuation—until the fourth century of *our* era, as stated in a celebrated passage in the Talmud (B *Nedarim,* 37 a and b). *Satis superque!*

Yet, this book was given an award by the Institute of France in 1977, and its promotion has been fabulous—all kinds of (musically ignorant) rabbis, (hebraically ignorant) composers and musicians have endorsed it. Let us finally look at the musical results "revealed" (to or by?) Vantoura. She begins with a "transcription" of Ps. 23, an audacious undertaking indeed, for according to the Talmud, the oral tradition of its chant in the Temple was lost about the year 120 when the last surviving Levites took the arcane tunes to their graves. In the second measure on page one, we find the strong superposited accent *rebia'* above the word *ro'ī* (my shepherd); according to Vantoura's rule on page 41, it ought to be subordinate to the antecedent accent *below* the text. This accent, however, happens to be a *munach,* the weakest of all accents. The same trouble arises with the word *umishahtékha* (thy staff) on page two, measure six, where the strong superposited *rebia'* follows the weak accent *merkha* below the text. Moreover, it reads falsely *shivtékha* instead of correctly *shivt'kha* (thy rod). Both melody and harmony follow slavishly good old tonic-dominant patterns.

Some years ago two publishers of this book asked for my endorsement of it. I authorized them to publish over my name: "I consider this book the perfect mixture of ignorance and confusion," *Dixi et scripsi.*

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Sigismondo d'India. Ottavo libro dei madrigali a cinque voci, 1624. Transcription and introduction by Glenn Watkins. (Musiche rinascimentali siciliane, X). Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980. [Introd. in Eng., 29 p., score, 63 p., no price given]

The music of Sigismondo d'India (ca. 1582–1629) continues to be heard by modern audiences with increasing frequency. Few who know his monodies would deny him a position of the highest rank in that genre. Like Monteverdi, d'India left a substantial corpus of polyphonic madrigals in addition to his important contributions in monody, and Glenn Watkins's edition of the *Ottavo libro dei madrigali a cinque voci* [*Eighth book of Madrigals for Five Voices*] provides a welcome addition to the works of d'India now available in modern editions.

Little is know of d'India's life. Of noble Sicilian birth, he is not known to have studied with any of the leading figures. He may have come in contact with Monteverdi in Mantua in 1606, and in 1609 he visited Florence, where Caccini heard and admired his work. His travels, which took him to Rome, Naples, Parma, Turin, and Modena must have exposed him to to the new style, for his music is closely allied with the progressive elements of his time, and his style shares much with that of Gesualdo, Wert, Marenzio, and Monteverdi.